

Message Text

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42

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DRAFTED BY EA/TB:GBROBERTS:MGH

APPROVED BY EA:PCHABIB

EA/VLC:JROSENTHAL

PM:CAPT MARRYOTT

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R 151430Z OCT 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T STATE 244620

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MASS, TH

SUBJECT: US MILITARY AID TO THAILAND

1. DURING THE COURSE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB'S OCTOBER 13 CONVERSATION WITH THAI AMBASSADOR ANAN ON THE KOREAN ISSUE (SEPTTEL), HABIB POINTED OUT THAT THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI'S PUBLIC COMMENTS THAT THE US MILITARY AID PROGRAM HAD BEEN WORTHLESS MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM (HABIB) TO DEFEND THE PROGRAM IN CONGRESS. HABIB STRESSED THAT SUCH COMMENTS SIMPLY WERE NOT HELPFUL.

2. ANAN ADMITTED THAT THERE WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HE WAS AN IMPULSIVE MAN WHOSE STATEMENTS COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED. HE SAW THE PRESS ALL THE TIME AND WAS CONTINUALLY SAYING UNWISE THINGS.

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ANAN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE TRUTH IN

WHAT CHATCHAI HAD SAID THIS TIME. THE US MILITARY AID PROGRAM TO THAILAND HAD NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE.

3. HABIB AGREED THAT MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT WHICH HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY THE THAIS WAS NOT PARTICULARLY USEFUL AND HAD NOT BEEN WELL EMPLOYED. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS WHAT THAILAND HAD REQUESTED, SO THERE

WAS PLENTY OF BLAME FOR EVERYONE IF THE PROGRAM HAD TURNED OUT NOT TO BE COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE. HE SUGGESTED FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF A COORDINATED MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM WITH CLEAR PRIORITIES AGAINST WHICH PROCUREMENT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN. THE PROGRAM COULD BE FUNDED EITHER BY GRANTS, CREDITS, OR CASH DEPENDING ON WHAT WAS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE CONGRESS. ANAN AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA.

4. HABIB NOTED THAT THE PASSAGE OF THE BUDGET APPEARED TO BE A PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THAI CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THAT THAI-LAO RELATIONS DID NOT APPEAR TO BE PARTICULARLY GOOD, AND ANAN AGREED THAT LAO HOSTILITY WAS AN IRRITANT. HABIB STRESSED THAT THE PATHET LAO WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE FORMER LAO LEADERSHIP AND THAT THE PL SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. INGERSOLL

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